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MINUTES

TAKEN AT THE SEVERAL ANNUAL CONFERENCES OF THE METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

FOR THE YEAR 1785.

As it was unanimously agreed at this Conference that circumstances made it expedient for us to become a separate body, under the denomination of the *Methodist Episcopal Church*, it is necessary that we should here assign some reasons for so doing.

The following extract of a letter from the Rev. Mr. John Wesley will afford as

good an explanation as can be given on this subject:—

“ *Bristol, Sept. 10, 1784.*

“To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in North America:—

“1. By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the

British empire; and erected into independent states. The English government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the congress, partly by the state assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice; and in compliance with their desire I have drawn up a little sketch.

"2. Lord King's account of the primitive church convinced me, many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and, consequently, have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our travelling preachers; but I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national Church to which I belonged.

"3. But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, and but few parish ministers; so that for some hundred miles together there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

"4. I have, accordingly, appointed Dr. COKE and Mr. FRANCIS ASBURY to be joint *superintendents** over our brethren in North America; as also RICHARD WHATCOAT and THOMAS VASEY to act as *elders* among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's supper.

"5. If any one will point out a more rational and Scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

"6. It has indeed been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object, (1.) I desired the bishop of Lon-

* As the translators of our version of the Bible have used the English word *bishop* instead of *superintendent*, it has been thought by us that it would appear more Scriptural to adopt their term *bishop*.

don to ordain one only, but could not prevail. (2.) If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings, but the matter admits of no delay. (3.) If they would ordain them *now*, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us! (4.) As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the state and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

"JOHN WESLEY."

Therefore, at this Conference, we formed ourselves into an independent church; and following the counsel of Mr. John Wesley, who recommended the episcopal mode of church government, we thought it best to become an episcopal church, making the episcopal office elective, and the elected superintendent, or bishop, amenable to the body of ministers and preachers.

Quest. 1. *Who are the superintendents of our church?*

Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury—2.

Quest. 2. *Who are the elders?*

Richard Whatcoat, Thos. Vasey, Freeborn Garrettson, Thos. S. Chew, William Gill, John Hagerty, Reuben Ellis, James O'Kelly, Richard Ivy, John Tunnell, Beverly Allen, Henry Willis, Caleb Boyer, James O. Cromwell, Enoch Matson, Nelson Reed, Jeremiah Lambert, Ignatius Pigman, Thos. Foster, John Baxter—20.

Quest. 3. *Who are the deacons?*

John Dickins, Michael Ellis, Philip Bruce, Wm. Ringold—4.

Quest. 4. *Who are the assistants?*

All the deacons:—Joseph Everett, Philip Cox, John Cooper, Ira Ellis, Samuel Dudley, Wm. Cannan, Henry Ogburn, James White, George Moore, William Thomas, Thomas Haskins, Thos. Curtis, William Phœbus, Adam Cloud, Robert Cloud, Peter Moriarty, Thomas Anderson, William Partridge, James Hinton, John Baldwin, Thos. Humphries, James Haw, Edward Morris, Simon Pile, Woolman Hickson, Richard Swift, William Glen-

deppening, John Major, Edward Drumgole, William Damaron, Thomas Bowen—31.

Quest. 5. *Who are admitted into full connection?*

Jesse Lee, James Hinton, William Damaron, Thomas Bowen, Thos. Anderson, Thomas Humphries, Richard Swift, Wm. Phœbus, William Ringold, Lemuel Green—10.

Quest. 6. *Who remain on trial?*

David Jefferson, Isaac Smith, John Smith, Elijah Ellis, John Robertson, Wm. Jessop, James Riggia, Wilson Lee, Simon Pile, Thomas Jackson, Samuel Breeze, Matthew Greentree, Thomas Ware, James Thomas—14.

Quest. 7. *Who are admitted on trial?*

Mark Whitaker, Henry Bingham, Geo. Noseworthy, Stephen Johnson, Thomas Williamson, John Freeman, Michael Gilbert, Joshua Hartley, Jeremiah Mastin, Hope Hull, Ezekiel Cooper, Hezekiah Bonham, Stephen Deakins, Levin Ross, Shores Bright, Eleazer Hathaway, Robert Sparks, William Steens, John Street, Amos G. Thompson, Robert Ayres, Jacob Brush—22.

Quest. 8. *Who desist from travelling?*

Samuel Rowe, James Martin, James Morris—3.

Quest. 9. *Who is laid aside?*

Lee Roy Cole.

Quest. 10. *Who have died this year?*

1. Caleb B. Pedicord,—a man of sorrows; and, like his Master, acquainted with grief; but a man dead to the world, and much devoted to God.

2. George Mair,—a man of affliction, but of great patience and resignation; and of excellent understanding.

Quest. 11. *Are there any objections to any of the preachers?*

They have been examined one by one.

Quest. 12. *How are the preachers stationed this year?*

Georgia, Beverly Allen.
Charleston, John Tunnell.
Georgetown, Woolman Hickson.

Henry Willis, *Elder*.
Yadkin, Henry Bingham, Thomas Williamson.
Holston, Richard Swift, Michael Gilbert.

Richard Ivy, *Elder*.
Caswell, Elijah Ellis.
Salisbury, Joshua Hartley, Hope Hull.
Halifax, Jas. Hinton, Geo. Noseworthy.

Reuben Ellis, *Elder*.
Wilmington, John Baldwin.
New River, Philip Bruce.
Tar River, Thos. Humphries, Isaac Smith, Roanoke, Edward Morris, Mark Whitaker.
New-Hope, Henry Jones.
Guilford, John Smith, Stephen Johnson.

Nelson Reed, *Elder*.
Camden, Wm. Partridge, Wm. Steens.
Portsmouth, Thos. Anderson, John Street.
Williamsburg, Jeremiah Mastin.

Enoch Matson, *Elder*.
Bertie, John Dickins, David Jefferson.
Sussex, Wm. Glendenuing, John Easter.
Brunswick, Edward Drumgole, Jas. Haw.
Mecklenburg, John Major, John Robertson.

James O'Kelly, *Elder*.
Amelia, Wm. Damaron, John Freeman.
Bedford, Thomas Bowen, James Kenney.
Orange, Thomas Jackson, Hezekiah Bonham, Stephen Deakins.

Thomas Foster, *Elder*.
Redstone, Peter Moriarty, John Fidler, Wilson Lee.
Alleghany, Lemuel Green, John Paup, William Jessop.
Berkley, Eleazer Hathaway.
Fairfax, Simon Pile.
St. Mary's, Ignatius Pigman.
Lancaster, Joseph Everett, Levin Ross.
Calvert, Michael Ellis.

Richard Whatcoat, *Elder*.
Frederick, Wm. Ringold, Samuel Breeze, Baltimore, Francis Poythress, Jonathan Forrest.

Caleb Boyer, *Elder*.
Kent, Thomas Curtis, George Moore.
Talbot, Thos. Haskins, Joseph Cromwell.
Dorchester, Wm. Thomas, Robert Ayres.
Northampton, Philip Cox, Moses Hurley.

William Gill, *Elder*.
Dover, Samuel Dudley, Joseph Wyatt.
Caroline, William Cannan, Jesse Lee, Shores Bright.
Somerset, Henry Ogburn, Amos G. Thompson.
Annapessex, James White, Robert Cann.

Thomas Vasey, *Elder*.
Little York, John Cooper.
Philadelphia, Ira Ellis, James Thomas.
Juniata, James Riggia.

Thomas S. Chew, *Elder*.
 West Jersey, William Phœbus, Thomas
 Ware, Robert Sparks.
 East Jersey, Adam Cloud, Matthew
 Greentree.
 Trenton, Robert Cloud, John M'Claskey,
 Jacob Brush.
 New-York, John Hagerty.
 Long Island, Ezekiel Cooper.
 Shelburne, Freeborn Garrettson.
 Port Roseway, James O. Cromwell.
 Antigua, Jeremiah Lambert, John Baxter.

Quest. 13. *What was collected for Cokes-
 bury College?*

£45 16s. sterling.

Quest. 14. *What was the yearly collection?*
 £300.

Quest. 15. *How was it expended?*

In making up the yearly deficiencies,
 and sending out two missionaries, and the
 expenses of our Conference.

Quest. 16. *What numbers are in Society?*
 Members 18,000. Preachers 104.

It is recommended to all our brethren
 to suspend the execution of the minute on
 slavery till the deliberations of a future
 Conference; and that an equal space of
 time be allowed all our members for con-
 sideration, when the minute shall be put
 in force.

N. B. We do hold in the deepest ab-
 horrence the practice of slavery; and shall
 not cease to seek its destruction by all
 wise and prudent means.

Quest. 17. *Where and when shall we hold
 our Conferences next year?*

1. Salisbury, North Carolina, Tuesday,
 Feb. 1, 1786.
2. Lanes' Chapel, Virginia, Monday,
 April 10, 1786.
3. Baltimore, May 8, 1786.